



Accent

An Avila University Publication

SPRING 2015

THE RACE EXPERIENCE
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A Tribute

Avila.edu

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Alumni and Friends,

It seems fitting to bring closure to what has been a very busy academic year. Is it a sign of aging, or just a sign of the times we are in, that time passes so quickly? It seems like yesterday we were moving students in and welcoming them to the Avila community. In reflection, I would describe it as a time of triumphs, transitions and transformations.

In terms of triumphs, the academic year began with the dedication of the Marie Joan Harris, CSJ, Ph.D. Science and Health Complex and the Learning Commons. Both are tremendous upgrades to the learning environment and were well received by students. These projects were wholly financed from the generous support of Avila friends and family. With that spirit of giving in mind, it should come as no surprise that our 2014 Steer Dinner and Auction was recognized as a top ten fundraising event in Kansas City. In this and many other ways, it has been a year of triumphs.

Sadly, it has been a year of transitions. Provost and vice president for academic affairs S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., long-time faculty members, Deana Angoti, Susan Fetsch, Ph.D., Fred Geer, Ph.D., Carole Hillstad, and Mark Seelbinder, Ph.D., (totaling over 140 years of Avila service) as well as our vice president for finance and administration, Paul Bookmeyer, and Terry Paine, from Student Receivables at the Business Office, are all retiring. Each has made tremendous contributions to the university. We also experienced

the passing of dear friends, including Dr. Tom Fritzlen, Vita Goppert and Jack Wylie, whose generous commitment and support are part of the physical transformation of Avila. We owe a debt of gratitude that words can never fully do justice.

Finally, it has been a year of planning and preparing for transformation as we launch a new core curriculum, a new strategic plan, and test multiple scenarios around a ten-year campus master plan. From creating a welcoming, caring, transformative learning environment focused on student success - mirrored in new facilities that support bold learning initiatives, to a core curriculum

that invites our students to engage the world and each other, these efforts represent real transformative learning. This results in our students being broadly educated, exceedingly well-prepared, and emboldened to make a difference in the world.

As you read this Accent, know we extend our sincere gratitude to you for joining us as we navigate the triumphs, transitions and transformations.

Gratefully,

Ronald A. Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA
President



President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, speaks at the 39th Annual Steer Dinner & Auction



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Accent is published twice yearly by the Office of Marketing & Communication. Opinions expressed in Accent are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University.

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S. MARIE TRANSITIONS




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Rising Star of Philanthropy



Jeremy Lillig '03 was named by The Independent magazine as one of 2015's Rising Stars of Philanthropy, representing "the next generation of volunteer leadership in Kansas City." Lillig received the honor because of his significant gifts of time, talent and treasure to numerous nonprofit organizations in our community. Lillig is the managing director of the Bright Futures Fund, which provides financial assistance to ensure Catholic education is affordable to everyone. He is a member of Avila University's Heritage Society, a former Alumni Board member and

a regular donor to Steer Dinner. Lillig is also a supporter and board member of Community LINC, an organization providing shelter and programming for individuals and families facing homelessness, and is co-founder of the Full Circle Theatre Company, a nonprofit, social justice theatre company which uses the performing arts to help people look at society in a different way and reflect on their own purpose in the world. Jeremy's play, "Whispers from the Street", has been produced 36 times and raised more than \$2 million for organizations that serve the homeless. 

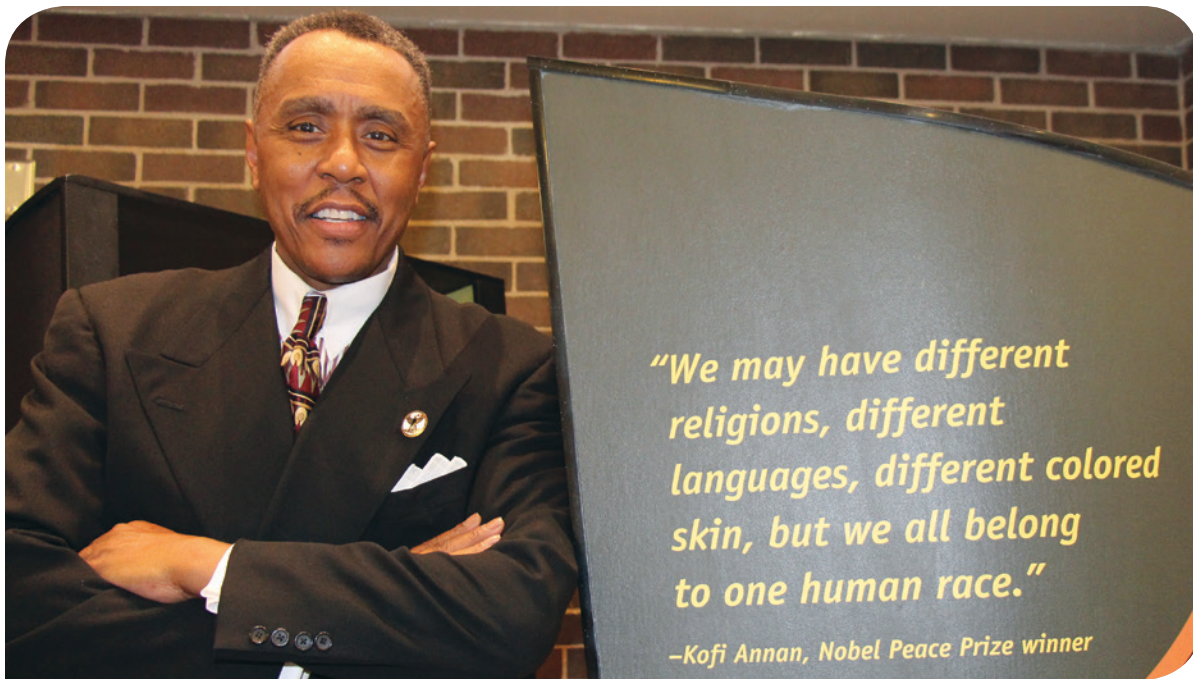
Opening Up To Graduate Studies



Adults interested in earning a bachelor's degree, master's degree or graduate certificate met with faculty, admission representatives and student mentors at the recent Avila Advantage and Graduate Studies Open House.

Did you know? Avila Alumni benefit from the Alumni Tuition Discount Program while earning advanced degrees.





"Art exhibits are meant to challenge us, invite introspection and start dialogue. The Race Experience did just that," said Dr. J. Anthony Snorgrass, Ph.D., Advertising, Branding & Strategic Media faculty at Avila University, School of Visual & Communication Arts.

The Human Race

The Race Experience kiosk is a traveling museum quality interactive exhibit that explores the value of diversity in society. For seven days, it was located in the Alumni Lounge, Marian Center on Avila's campus where more than 400 students participated in the experiment.

Once inside the kiosk, users take a picture of themselves. This information is used to create a realistic skin and

facial structure that strikes the balance between the user's own face and the new one created on the screen. Participants see themselves in a different skin and are able to pictorially change their race to Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and Indian.

The Race Experience promotes the notion that there is only one race and that is the Human Race.

Avila Sophomore Rendale Johnson

said he didn't know what to expect, now he's seeing the world differently. "It's crazy seeing yourself as a different race," Johnson said.

The Black Student Union (BSU) worked collaboratively with other student organizations including the Talon Media Network, Campus Ministries, Global Studies, and GAP (Group Activities Programming) to bring this to campus. 🗣️



WAY TO GO AVILA!

The 2014 Steer Dinner and Auction was recognized by The Independent magazine as one of the Top Ten Fundraising events in Kansas City based upon net revenues. Steer Dinner is ranked seventh on the list. President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, accepted the award on behalf of the University and 2014 chairs, Dave '76 and Geri Frantze and Ken and Marilyn Hager, and said, "It is quite an accomplishment that Avila is the only university that is named alongside other prestigious organizations and fundraising events."

Kansas and Missouri Regional Science Bowl



Avila hosted the Kansas & Missouri region of the National High School Science Bowl sponsored by Honeywell & U.S. Department of Energy.



Honor Society Hosts STEM

Earlier this year, Avila's Tri-Beta National Biological Honor Society hosted 90 Girl Scouts for a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) event. The Girl Scouts in attendance explored subjects such as mathematics, engineering, technology, biology and chemistry with professors and students with a fun and experiential approach.



During Lent, the Music Dept. presented a musical ritualization of the Stations of the Cross based on the book, "Faithwalkers: Passages of Suffering and Hope" by Fr. Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S with music composed by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Avila University Chaplain.



Advancement Staff members, Sara Boatwright, Michael Kight, Melissa Isacs and Erika Geering review a campus model, part of the planning process for a 10-year campus master plan. Faculty, staff, alumni, university leaders, and students have been hard at work since June 2014 developing a new strategic plan and a campus master plan.

First Year Student Reflections

The First Year Experience at Avila University includes being part of the Common Reading Program, where incoming students read a selected book and begin an examination of the topic with a written essay. The University dedicates the Harry S. Truman Distinguished Lecture to the selected author and ultimately, “Helping the Dear Neighbor

Student Reflections” is published. Alephonsion “Alepho” Deng, “They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky: The true story of three Lost Boys from Sudan,” is the subject of this year’s book. The Reflection’s book contains students’ reactions to Alepho Deng’s talk and to their experience, learning, and ongoing involvement with their own missions in the world.



HALEY PICKERT - Major: Nursing
Hometown: Overland Park, Kan.

“Hearing Alepho speak was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The man that survived a treacherous journey across Sudan was standing a few feet away.... I felt that was God’s way of calling to me and saying, ‘You can help others even if they are half way across the world.’”



RYAN MEYER - Major: Business Admin,
Hometown: O’Fallon, Mo.

“The more we teach others about the world’s problems the more awareness will increase. People may not show their potential but everyone has the potential to do amazing things through simple actions.”



PAIGE DOSCH - Major: Pre-Health Professions,
Hometown: Raymore, Mo.

“This whole semester has really opened up my eyes to everything that goes on in everyone’s world, not just mine.”



JESSICA LEWIS - Major: Pre-Health Professions,
Hometown: Eskridge, Kan.

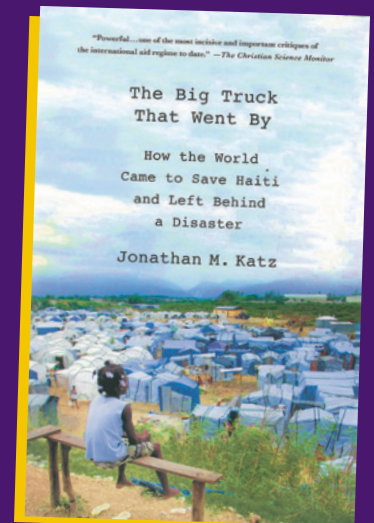
“With limitless resources and an emphasis on the call to make an impact in some way, Avila is the greatest place I can think of to prepare me to make my difference and to test my resilience.”



LANCE LEWIS - Major: Kinesiology
Hometown: Raytown, Mo.

“I have learned not to see everyone as just another person. We are more than what we appear and we need to show that kind of respect to each other.”

COMMON READING BOOK



The 2015 Harry S. Truman Distinguished Lecture is on Wednesday, October 7, when Jonathan M. Katz discusses his book, “The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left a Disaster Behind.” The lecture is complimentary and open to the public.

Faculty & Staff Retirements

Deana Angotti, M.S.
—Director of the
School of Education
Graduate Program

for the past 20 years is retiring this year. During her time at Avila, Angotti has taught undergraduate and graduate education courses, supervised practicum and student teachers, served on the advisory council for the School of Graduate Studies and the Global Studies Committee, and served as academic advisor for master's completion and graduate certification students. "Retirement provides me with the opportunity to create a new chapter in my life. I hope to touch the world in a thousand little ways to make it a better place."



Avila's Centennial Anniversary, we are poised to continue to grow in excellence and thrive in the future.

My wife, Sandy, and I are both proud graduates of, and firm believers in the importance of private liberal arts education, and look forward to continued involvement with Avila University. We look forward to traveling, playing golf and enjoying our children and grandchildren."

Susan Fetsch, Ph.D., RN –
School of
Nursing Dean
and Professor
of Nursing

Susan Fetsch, Ph.D., RN, is retiring this year after 21 years at Avila. Susan is a highly reputable member of the Kansas City nursing community, receiving the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellow (2006-2009), chairing the Kansas Action for Children—a children's advocacy group, and working with several other professional committees.



"Twenty-one years ago I began a career in educational leadership at Avila University. During those years I have been trusted with the growth and nurturing of the School of Nursing and have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people. As an individual I have grown professionally, personally and spiritually. I will miss the opportunity to directly impact the preparation of nurses as well as the nursing profession. The profession of nursing and higher education are at a critical juncture. I am confident that Avila University is in a good position to influence/weather that change."

**Fred Geer, Ph.D.—Professor of
Education & Psychology - 40 years at
Avila.** See page 19.

**S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D. – Provost &
Vice President of academic affairs – 45
years at Avila.** See page 8.

Paul Bookmeyer—
Vice President of
Finance & Administrative Services,
CFO Bookmeyer
is retiring after
14 years of dedicated service. He
has served as a
valued member
of the Executive Committee.



"It has been my privilege and honor to have played an instrumental role in higher education over the last thirty years as Vice President of Finance at three private liberal arts institutions. I will miss all the wonderful people I have had the privilege of working with at Avila over the past 14 years from dedicated colleagues, faculty and staff to inspiring students. I have enjoyed being part of many improvements at Avila and will miss being involved with that process.

Avila's mission and values reflect the way I believe we should live our lives and treat others. There is a sense of great satisfaction for me in knowing that together much has been accomplished and that, as we celebrate

Carole Hillestad, M.S. Ed. '89—
Chair and
Director of
Radiologic Science
Program and
Assistant Professor
of Radiologic
Sciences



Hillestad received her bachelor's degree in Radiologic Science from Avila in 1989, went on to get her master's degree in Education at Kansas State University, and has since served the Avila community, teaching nearly all courses at one time or another in the Radiologic Science major and advising students for the past 29 years.

"I have been at Avila University since February, 1986, which means I have been here a little over 29 years! Twenty-seven of those years I spent as the Program Director for Radiologic Science and the other two years as an instructor and the Avila clinical instructor at St. Joseph Medical Center. I also earned my undergraduate degree at Avila. It seems like Avila has been a part of my life forever... starting with grade school when we participated in the catholic school musicals held on the Main street campus. I cannot think of a better way to have spent almost half of my life so far. I love Avila University. I have always been happy to tell people that not only do I work here but I am an alumna.

A student asked me recently about my career at Avila. I told her that if she is even half as happy as I have been to be a part of Avila in her career choice, she will be very blessed! I have been blessed over and over to spend a huge part of my life at Avila as a student, a teacher and an Associate for the Sisters of St. Joseph. Would I change anything? Not a thing, except maybe to stay longer but then I would wonder about the next chapter in my life-retirement. Thank you Avila for being my second home!"

On Board

Avila Welcomes Three to Board of Trustees

Terry Paine—Student Receivables in the Business Office Paine will retire this year after 20 years at Avila University.

“In the course of my time at Avila, I encountered many wonderful students and parents. I also had the opportunity to work alongside numerous outstanding individuals in the Avila community. I believe that I learned something from each of them which I hope to carry with me into retirement.”



Mark Seelbinder, Ph.D. — Associate Professor of Chemistry

Dr. Seelbinder is retiring after 27 years at Avila. He is a member of the American Chemical Society, National Association of Chemical Hygiene Officers, SkyWarn at the National Weather Service office in Pleasant Hill, Amateur Radio Emergency Services and Chemistry Teachers at Liberal Arts Colleges.

“There was a depressing period early in my career where it appeared that I would spend my entire career teaching only analytical and general chemistry courses. But then the possibility arose to return to my hometown, where my parents were still living, to teach at Avila College. The college and department administration not only allowed me to teach in areas of interest outside these traditional areas, but encouraged me to develop and teach courses in some of my other interest areas. This afforded me the opportunity to develop and teach a meteorology course for non-scientists, an interdisciplinary course in science and philosophy, and an interdisciplinary course on natural disasters and the health care system, (in addition to my chemistry teaching assignments in general, analytical and physical chemistry.) I could not have dreamed of a more rewarding atmosphere to teach in. I must have been the luckiest professor alive. Sagenhaft!”



Bob Hardin '78, Greg Kratofil and Mike Kelley '85 were recently announced as the newest members of Avila University's Board of Trustees. “We are excited to add Avila alumni and well respected business leaders in the Kansas City community to our Board,” said Avila President Ron Sleptiza, Ph.D., CSJA.

Bob Hardin '78 is enjoying retirement after a 35 year career in the banking industry including 12 years with Country Club Bank where he was the Executive VP. Hardin served the community on numerous boards including as President of the Belton Educational Foundation, Missouri Bankers Association, Chairman of the Cass County Zoning Commission, Belton, Raymore and Grandview Chambers of Commerce, and Belton Council for Economical Development.

Hardin is a former member of Avila's Board of Counselors and most recently was the 2015 Steer Dinner Event Co-Chair, with his wife, Pat '79. He is an Avila alumnus who graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in finance. He continued his education at the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Greg Kratofil, Jr. is a technology attorney and partner with Polsinelli. He represents information security providers in all aspects of the industry, including corporate partnering, acquisitions, security/forensic reporting requirements,

data breaches, and U.S. Department of Defense and government contracting. Kratofil is outside general counsel



to many of the regions new and emerging technology companies including Google Fiber for Communities Project. He

received his bachelor of arts in economics from Loyola University-New Orleans and his Juris Doctorate from Saint Louis University.

Mike Kelley '85 is Chief Sustainability Officer and Vice President of External Affairs for YRC. His career at YRC began as Manager of Government Relations and then as Director of Government Affairs. He worked as a member of the corporate leadership team that obtained a new collective bargaining agreement and financially restructured the company. Kelley also created the environmental sustainability program for YRC and helped lead the industry into the first realm of environmental awareness and activism. Currently, he is leading an effort to partner with industry officials to achieve a complete ban on cell phone use in commercial vehicles. Kelley



is an Avila alumnus who graduated with his bachelor of arts in political science and earned his M.B.A. from Rockhurst University. He was the 2014 recipient of Avila's Alumni Achievement Award.



A Tribute... After 45 years... A Transition

Saying Farewell to S. Marie by Deanna Nelson



In 1970, when Marie Joan Harris, CSJ, Ph.D., began her career at Avila University, campus looked a bit different. “Avila had just transitioned to co-ed, so there were very few men on campus. The second residence hall had just been built. Enrollment was around four or five hundred, and we didn’t have nearly as many buildings,” she said.

In 1987, after 17 years teaching chemistry, S. Marie stepped into her current administrative role. She’s held many titles over the years – chairperson, dean, vice president and provost – and overseen just about every department at the university. “Wherever there was a need, I stepped up to help,” she said.

But her proudest accomplishments have more to do with others than herself. She brought together the faculty and staff to create Avila’s value statements. “At the time, I had no idea how those values would become so much a part of the institution. They are powerful because they reflect the lived reality of all the people here.”



S. Marie holds up her Avila University tackle box gifted to her at the 39th Annual Steer Dinner Auction. She will pursue her fishing hobby during retirement.



She also helped establish Avila Advantage, participated in two revisions of the core curriculum and three Higher Learning Commission accreditation visits, and instituted the faculty assembly and the faculty scholarship grant committee. Of course, she's quick to point out, "None of this I did alone."

"I'm really proud of the faculty

we have at Avila and all they have accomplished. The faculty assembly allows them to come together as a group, get to know one another, share achievements, and be empowered to exercise their role in governance. The scholarship grants have influenced the culture of the faculty here, supporting them to pursue research and other scholarly work."

S. Marie takes a collaborative approach to leadership. "When she was leading the values project, the vote to adopt the value statements was almost unanimous. This might seem small to some people, but it's not. It's an indication that all voices were heard, and that the values reflected the entire university," said Larry Sullivan, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Science & Health.

"I have a philosophy that the product that comes out of working

together is much better if it's done with the input of others. So many times I have an idea and when I bring it forward it gets tweaked, changed and improved," S. Marie said.

When she was first beginning her career, S. Marie felt a strong desire to make a difference. "I wanted to change the world," she said. "But in my 30s, I came to the conclusion that you make a difference where you find yourself. And for me, that was Avila."

Asked about the legacy she will leave behind, S. Marie replied, "I don't think about that word, 'legacy', much. We all leave a legacy. I have touched a lot of people's lives, but a lot of people have touched mine. It's the relationships we have with one another that shape our lives. Those relationships make us who we are." 📖





“She exudes a quiet confidence. She is able to exert her influence without anyone even knowing.

Her ability to build consensus is excellent. She considers and allows all points of view to be heard. She guides the decision making process so that it ends up in the best place, which might not necessarily be what she agrees with.

She is a person of exceptional character. She possesses all the characteristics of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and more. She is the type of person you’d like to be yourself.

If you know her very well, you almost want to make her a saint. But she would never have that.

It’s one thing to be thoughtful, considerate and saintly. It’s quite another to also be highly intellectual, experienced and accomplished professionally and academically. S. Marie is widely respected in the business community as a leader who has achieved great success.”

– Joe Fahey, Vice-Chair, Avila Board of Trustees



Impressions...

“The blessing for me was S. Marie. She was an outstanding role model for me. As I watched her, I learned about the teacher I wanted to be.”

– Larry Sullivan, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Science and Health



“It has been a pleasure to have S. Marie as my boss and mentor. Through her servant leadership and inspirational guidance, she has transformed the educational environment at Avila University. While her daily presence on campus will be missed, her influence on the people and education at Avila will be long-lasting.”

– Susan Fetsch, Ph.D., R.N., Dean of Nursing



“S. Marie became my major mentor at Avila, and she was a major influence on me. Through my close relationship with S. Marie, I was able to understand what the Sisters of St. Joseph brought to the college. I learned this by seeing the way S. Marie interacted with the students as she encouraged them to reach their goals. Often, we would see a student with only average academic achievements in their early years, go on to make great improvements and achieve their goals.

The blessing for me was S. Marie. She was an outstanding role model for me. As I watched her, I learned about the teacher I wanted to be.

We still work together now and she is still a mentor to me. She gave me great insight into many different initiatives, and provided guidance to move Science & Health forward at Avila. She has been a strong leader overall for Academics, for all of Academics – she has given us the support we need.”

– Larry Sullivan, Ph.D.,
Dean of the School of Science and Health

“She is the voice of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, in the cleanest, clearest and most meaningful way.

She brings a sense of measured desire to move us constantly forward, while also keeping us focused on our unique Avila values.

S. Marie’s 45 years were a gift lovingly given, generously shared, with inspiring vision.

She sees people for who they might be – not just who they are. She is aware of their potential, beyond perhaps what they are even aware of.

S. Marie’s legacy is one of care, service and accomplishment. It includes a strong idea of how to embody the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph and it’s a banner we proudly carry forward.”

– **Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA**
Avila University President



“Working with her for more than a decade, I’ve seen firsthand her influence. The impact she has on others is all about a bond and relationship she is able to create with them. The relationship she has with faculty is exceptional. They have a critical trust in her, a trust that has allowed her to be able to guide the faculty and encourage them to be constantly improving in the areas of teaching and learning.”

– **Bob Hunter, Chairman,**
Avila Board of Trustees

“Sister Marie has been a trusted leader, colleague, mentor and friend to the Avila faculty throughout her years here. She has encouraged faculty and students alike to use their strengths, find their gifts, and make a difference in the institution and in the world. In this day of constant movement, it is a rare to find a person who has whole-heartedly dedicated 45 years to the same endeavors. Her calm and reassuring presence has been an integral part of our Avila mission and values and will continue to be part of the history and foundation in the years ahead. She is loved by faculty and students and will be deeply missed.”

– **Karen Garber-Miller, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Education**



“S. Marie’s commitment to scholarship, high academic standards, and the values of the liberal arts and sciences has inspired us all. She leaves a distinguished legacy, and we are appreciative of her remarkable accomplishments.”

– **Charlene Gould Ph.D.,**
Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences



“S. Marie embodies all that is good about higher education, most notably, academic excellence.”

– **Richard Woodall, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business**



“Anything I would say about S. Marie would be totally inadequate to express the impact she has had on me personally and on Avila University. S. Marie embodies all of Avila’s values and has been the biggest champion and architect of its excellence in teaching and learning. In my mind, she IS Avila University.”

– **Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D., Dean of School of Visual & Communication Arts**



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“S. Marie truly believes that education can change the world, has a strong heart for the work of the faculty, and believes in the Avila mission. When considering actions and decisions, she is thoughtful, respects the dignity of the persons involved and collaborates with others to find the best solutions. Additionally, for me personally, Marie has been supportive, challenging me to be the best I could become, and has laughed and cried with me when it was needed most. Her sense of humor and celebration for life’s blessings could always be counted on when needed. I will truly miss working with one of my best friends when she leaves.”

– **Sue King, Ph.D., '79 Vice President for Information Services & Vice Provost**



“There are many ways to change the world—inventing a product, curing a disease, leading a political movement. Many people also change the world in small, but equally powerful ways - through daily interactions with people, by caring, listening, guiding and encouraging. S. Marie really did both. It’s what makes her so amazingly exceptional. She touched thousands of lives through education, in the classroom and beyond its walls. She achieved great professional accomplishments. She changed the world day by day, in so many seemingly small interactions with others - kind words, generosity of time and passion, commitment to Avila University, and dedication to learning. It is rare to encounter someone who changed the world in both ways, but it is what makes S. Marie, S. Marie.”

– **Deanna Nelson, Senior Director of Development**



“S. Marie represents the era of sisters who have taught us so well over the past 180 years in this country. It has now been passed on to us and it is our mission to carry on this ministry of education. She passes on a great legacy for us to carry forth.”

– **Dave Armstrong, Director of Mission Effectiveness and Campus Ministries**



Honor S. Marie

Please join us in honoring S. Marie by supporting her scholarship fund. Contributions can be made online at www.avila.edu/give or mailed to S. Marie Scholarship, c/o Advancement Department, Avila University, 11901 Wornall Road, Kansas City, Mo. 64145.

Taking The Lead

Welcome Avila's New Vice President of Academic Affairs



Cathryn Pridal, Ph.D., who has 32 years of experience as a faculty member, administrator and executive at some of the most highly-regarded institutes of higher education in the U.S., is Avila University's new Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Pridal has served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Cottey College in Nevada, Mo. since July 2009. She has provided leadership for the overall planning, development, implementation, evaluation and fiscal management of the academic area as well as supervising all aspects of the college's academic operations. The past three years, she served as a peer reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission and played a role in all stages of the higher education accreditation process. Starting June 15,

Pridal assumes the position that Avila's Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, Marie Joan Harris, CSJ, Ph.D., has held.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the Avila team and working with them to implement the exciting vision of President Ron Slepitz," Pridal said. "I am impressed by the dedication and support provided by the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff and look forward to working collaboratively as we enhance the already strong and vibrant student learning opportunities at Avila."

Avila President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, said, "I am excited about Cathryn joining the team. She will be a good colleague and a thoughtful and innovative leader of the learning environment here at Avila. She will be a great addition." 📖

Alumni Spotlight

Judge Edith Messina



Judge Edith Messina '66, '06 retired from the bench in December, where she served as a circuit court judge for the 16th Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri. She was the first female appointed circuit judge, appointed by former Missouri governor Christopher "Kit" S. Bond in October 1984.

"I would not give up the experiences I've had for 30 years as a judge," said Messina. "The work was always challenging and interesting. Being a judge affords an individual the opportunity to contribute to the community in a very unique way. Few people get the chance to serve as a judge, so I consider myself very lucky. It's been wonderful for 30 years."

Messina has received many awards, including the 2008 Dean of the Bar award, Alumni Award in Psychology from Avila University in 2008, the Avila Ariston Award and Medal of Honor. She has also spent time in the Peace Corps, where she served as a high school teacher in Nigeria for two years. As for what she believes to be her greatest accomplishment, Messina says, "I hope it hasn't happened yet. I still believe it is right around the corner."

Messina earned a bachelor's degree in English from Avila University. She went on to the University of Missouri-Kansas City to receive a Juris Doctor degree, and returned to Avila in 2006 to earn a master's degree in Counseling. 📖

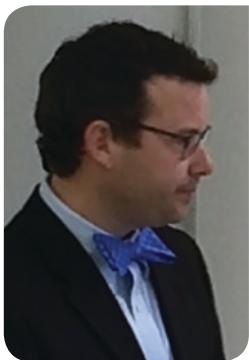
FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Karin Gastreich, Ph.D., signing copies of her book, Eolyn.

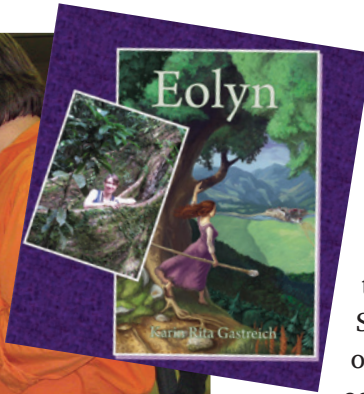
Karin Gastreich, Ph.D., assistant professor of Biology, presented an abstract titled “The Exchange between Scientific Knowledge and Indigenous Traditions” at the III Congreso Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Saludo Global (III Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Global Health) at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Leah Gensheimer, Ph.D., associate professor of Psychology, was part of a Participant Exchange entitled “Designing an Orientation Course to the Psychology Major: Content, Assignments, & Challenges” at the 37th Annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP), held in St. Pete Beach, Fla.



Bradley Poos, Ph.D., assistant professor of Education, presented papers at the Organization of Educational Historians (OEH) annual conference in Chicago, Ill. (papers titled: “En Garde: Fencing in Kansas City’s Urban Core, 1991-1995” and “Lincoln High School African American Graduates in Kansas City, 1955-1985”) and the National Alliance of Black School

Educators (NABSE) annual conference in Kansas City, Mo., (paper titled: “Lincoln High School and Central High School: Narratives of Segregated Schooling, 1955-1985”).



Kris Proctor, Ph.D., chair and assistant professor in the Department of Law and Justice Studies, presented two papers titled: (1) “Cumulative Scientific Theory Development within Criminology: A Mechanistic Ap-

proach”; and (2) “The Neuroscience of Self-Regulation: A Tool for Developing a Cumulative Theory” at the 70th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology in San Francisco, Calif.



Leslie Smith, Ph.D., assistant professor of Religious Studies, traveled to Hannover, Germany, as a member of the International Scholars Program, hosted by the Institute für Theologie und Wissenschaftsreligion at the Leibniz Universität Hanover (University of Hanover). While there, she gave a public lecture on her new book and also taught a course entitled “The Politics of Fundamentalism,” which discussed both the political impact of fundamentalist movements, as well as the politics underscoring the way that scholars both study and discuss them.

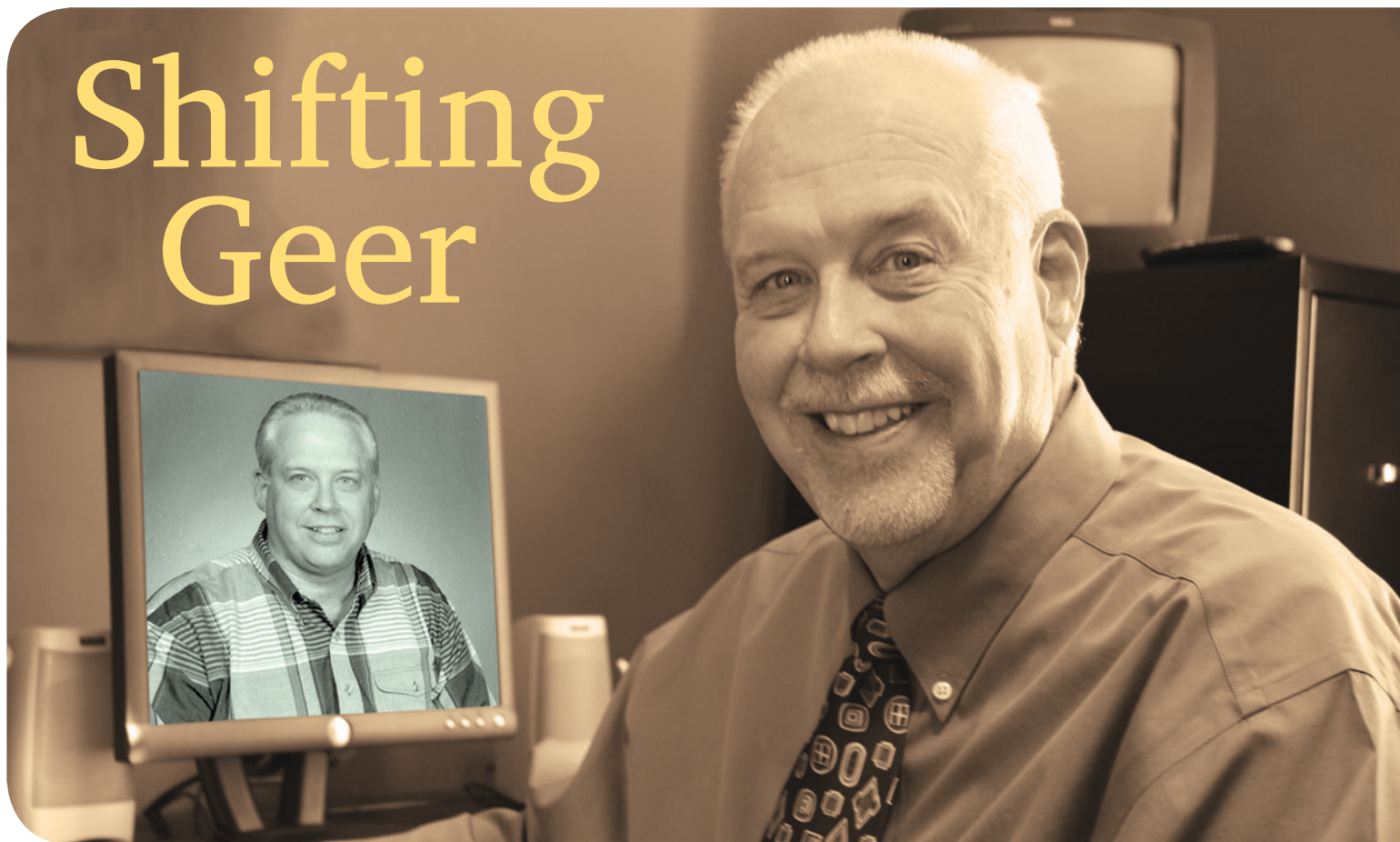


Robert Powell, Ph.D., professor of Biology, presented a paper titled Thermal Biology and Microhabitat Use in Puerto Rican Eyespot Geckos (*Sphael’Odactyllis macrolepis*) at the 2014 Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in Chattanooga, Tenn. He solicited advice from colleagues regarding distribution maps for use in a field guide to North American Reptiles and Amphibians tentatively scheduled for publication in 2015 or early 2016.



Robert Powell, Ph. D., holding his 35 Year Service Award

Shifting Geer



Avila University says farewell to long-time, dedicated professor, Fred Geer, Ph.D. After 40 years of faithful service, Dr. Geer will be retiring in June 2015. During his time at Avila University, Dr. Geer taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses, served as academic advisor for special education majors, regularly supervised student teachers, and served as the faculty athletics representative.



Dr. Geer has been a respected Professor of Education and Psychology, an athletics leader and a devoted professional during his time at Avila. Family, friends, and colleagues reminisced about their favorite memories and the impact Dr. Geer has made in the lives of many at Geer's recent event "A Toast and Light Roast".

Dr. Geer and his family have established the Dr. Fred Geer Family Scholarship in his honor. To make a contribution in Dr. Geer's honor visit www.avila.edu/give or send donations by postal mail to Avila's Advancement Office.



"The end is nothing other than the opportunity of a new beginning."

- Dr. Geer



Classroom Knowledge Put to Work



Alison Thornton '12 has a mantra she repeats often when discussing leadership coaching.

Ask powerful questions so clients can find the answers they already have within themselves.

Thornton has found one profound answer through her Leadership Coaching Certificate coursework in Avila Advantage, Avila University's innovative adult education program. It's been an important and effective element in her professional practice in human resources and organizational development at Children's Mercy Hospital. In her role, she partners with leaders to help the organization operate more efficiently and work through problems when they arise.

She uses both consulting and coaching skills in her work; two approaches she said vary greatly. She also develops and facilitates classes for leaders and employees.

"You can apply coaching in any setting," said Thornton, who graduated from Avila with a master of science in orga-

nizational development in 2012. "And, it can bring about huge change. Coaching is not about giving advice, but helping people figure out the answers themselves.

"It opens the door to better communication. You achieve more effectiveness."

A native of St. Joseph, Mo., she received her undergraduate degree from Northwest Missouri State in Maryville before "discovering" Avila for her graduate work.

"I researched a lot of schools in the area, but once I saw Avila and Avila Advantage and what it had to offer, it was like a lightning bolt," she said. "I really like that most of the classes aren't too large. You don't have to fight to have your voice heard, and you can get that one-on-one interaction with professors that's crucial to effective learning."

"I can tell you definitively, I would not have the job I have without the master's I got at Avila," she said. "And now, the coaching program has taken me to the next level. It's already helped me tremendously at home and at work."

Religious Understanding



Above: Pictured left to right: (front) Sai Bhatwadekar, Ph.D., Carly Lane, Leslie Dorrough Smith, Ph.D., (back) S. Amer Latif, Ph.D., Kevin Schilbrack, Martin Shuster, Ph.D. and William Edelglass, Ph.D.

Right: S. Amer Latif, Ph.D., panelist, and President Ron Sleptiza, Ph.D., CSJA share a conversation prior to the Public Town Hall.

In conjunction with other university researchers, Martin Shuster, Ph.D., chair, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy served as a co-principal investigator in a research project into religious understanding as part of a research grant in philosophy of religion awarded by the “Varieties of Understanding” project, funded by the Templeton Foundation. A Religious Public Town Hall was held in the Whitfield Center with expert panelists to openly engage and discuss the topic of religious understanding.

Leslie Dorrough Smith, Ph.D., assistant professor of Religious Studies, and chair, Women’s and Gender Studies, also served on the panel.



New International Education Programs

The International Education program in the School of Education prepares students to become effective advocates in a global community. The International Education and Advocacy bachelor’s degree prepares educational advocates who have the desire, skills and capacity to work holistically with children and youth from varied

cultures. Educational advocates are trained professionals, who support families, children, and community programs.

The International Education and Leadership master’s degree concentration focuses on education both as an instrument for international development and as a means of promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. Educational deficits, economic difficulties, environmental concerns, poverty and human rights are issues that cut across national boundaries, affecting individuals and entire populations around the world. As countries become



more interdependent, and as events in one nation produce chain reactions in other countries, it becomes critical for leaders to understand how to make decisions and implement practices that have the global good in mind. Classes start soon. Apply online at www.avila.edu/education/international.asp.



Learning To Help The World



Paris



Washington DC

Avila's Center for Global Studies and Social Justice announced the fall 2015 travel courses to France, Switzerland, Berlin, Cuba, and Washington D.C.. These are designed to bring on-campus, academic coursework together with culturally immersive opportunities beyond campus. Each session is led by two professors from different disciplines creating an extra-ordinary opportunity of interdisciplinary learning to students. These rich experiences deliver benefits to students including perspectives in terms of religion, natural science, health science, social science, the humanities and the arts. Over the past semesters, students have travelled to and studied in India, Costa Rica, Rwanda, Guatemala, South Korea, Ecuador and Montreal. 🌍



Berlin



Cuba



Rwanda



Rwanda



Rwanda

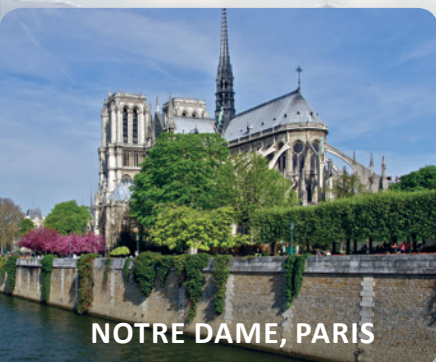


CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
1916-2016

CENTENNIAL TRIP



LYON, FRANCE



NOTRE DAME, PARIS



LACEMAKING



EIFFEL TOWER, PARIS

Please join **Avila President Ron and First Lady Suzanne Slepitza**, alumni, faculty, staff and friends on the trip of a lifetime and a journey to celebrate Avila University's Centennial. Mark your calendar for May 22-30, 2016.

Our journey begins with three days in Paris, where you'll tour iconic sites such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral and Arc de Triomphe. Then continue to LePuy-en-Velay, where the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet formed in the 17th century. Local experts, **Sisters Joan Lescinski and Kitty Hanley**, will guide us while sharing legendary stories about our founding sisters.

Centennial Trip Information

Join us for an information session.

Thursday, May 28, 2015

5:00 p.m.

Blue Hills Country Club

777 W Burning Tree Drive

Kansas City, MO 64145

To RSVP for the Centennial Trip Information Session
contact Bailey Carr, director
of alumni relations & annual fund
at 816.501.3780 or bailey.carr@avila.edu

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Avila University is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Second Chances

Social work/music alum creates helpful program for foster parents

It wasn't so much that Derek Domerese '13 gravitated toward a career in social work, but social work came to him.

He grew up learning about family dynamics, interpersonal relationships and child care first-hand, in a vast and diverse family with 11 siblings, many of them half-siblings. While growing up in Belton, Mo., his best friend was in foster care and later adopted. He said he's known since middle school that, if he were to ever have children, he was going to adopt.

"That all got the wheels turning," Domerese said. "I knew that I wanted to do something that changed and helped kids' lives."

Today, Domerese, 26, is doing just that, as director of resource development for Jackson County at the Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association (MFCAA). Getting to this point was a circuitous route that included stops at three different colleges, ultimately leading to Avila University. It was at Avila, he said, where his skills as a social worker formed and flourished.

"I had done research on social work programs in the area, and the Avila social work department was known as one of the best around," said Domerese, who was recruited to Avila out of Metropolitan Community College by Lindee Petersen Wilson, associate professor of social work, director of field

education. "I knew this was where I wanted to be."

It was at Avila where he first had an opportunity to work with MFCAA. In the fall of 2011, he received a senior internship working at the association. One of the first tasks assigned to him was to build a respite program for foster parents, which allows foster parents to leave their children in a safe environment with other licensed care-givers and take a break or have a night out.

"I looked at what other programs had to offer," Domerese said. "I was able to build training that's now recognized state-wide."

The success of his respite program earned Domerese full-time employment at MFCAA, where he is in charge of all licensing in Jackson County, Mo. Today, there are monthly large-scale respite events throughout the area. Foster children can gather with their peers and have fun while their parents get a night out.

In fact, Domerese's programs were such a hit, he was invited to speak at a conference for the North

American Council on Adoptable Children in Toronto. He also has put his social work skills to use in his personal life, as an adoptive father of two children and foster-care parent for four others.

Domerese was due to graduate from Avila in May 2012, but decided to return for one more year to earn a second degree in vocal music performance. When he's not working at MFCAA, he also teaches private voice and piano lessons.

"Avila allowed me to build skill sets in social work and music," he said. "I'm very thankful for Dr. Amity Bryson, who did a great job directing my music education."

"At Avila, they taught me techniques and then allowed me to put different techniques into practice. It's not just theory, but practice as well. They made sure I was getting actual experience. They were really understanding if I had to stay home to care for a child. And, Avila provided me with an awesome network in the social work community."

"It was an amazing experience." 🐾



The Selma Effect:

Catholic Nuns and Social Justice for 50 Years

by Carol K. Coburn, Ph.D. Professor
of Religious Studies, Avila University



When six Catholic nuns from St. Louis boarded a chartered plane headed for Selma, Alabama, in the early morning hours of March 10, 1965, they had no idea they were about to change their own destinies and the lives of many U.S. women religious. Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Rosemary Flanigan (pictured below) and Roberta Schmidt were two of those sisters. Traveling with 48 other men and women from a variety of faith traditions, the sisters were scheduled to join hundreds of demonstrators in a voting rights' march scheduled for later that morning in Selma. A few days later S. Barbara Moore, CSJ made the journey into history and marched in Selma. They were joined by over 50 sisters representing over 12 religious orders, many coming from Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago. This event became one of the enduring iconic moments of the Civil Rights Movement.

Their actions helped propel Catholic sisters into a new era that forever changed the face of religious life and would inevitably redefine how sisters understood and acted upon social justice issues for the rest of the century. Sisters restructured and redefined their communities, their individual commitments and work roles, and contributed greatly to the late 20th-century critique of the underlying systemic discrimination present in American

society that continues to perpetuate race, class, ethnic and gender inequalities. Working in groups with each other, as well as lay Catholics and non-Catholics, many Catholic sisters participated in anti-war and peace movements, political lobbying organizations, anti-death penalty groups, corporate investment watchdog organizations, rural and urban education programs, healthcare, disability, and poverty programs, among others. And more recently, Catholic sisters have moved to help "re-vision" the future, bringing issues of globalization, environmental responsibility and cosmology under the burgeoning umbrella of social justice and global transformation in the 21st century. The sisters' legacy or gift is embedded deeply into the fabric of our society; and ultimately, it may prove to be the most profound and lasting legacy of the U.S. Catholic Church in the 20th century.

For the full article in *Global Sisters Report*, see the March 9th online edition at <http://globalsistersreport.org/news/selma-effect-catholic-nuns-and-social-justice-50-years-21201>

2015 Honorary Doctorates

Three of the Sisters mentioned in this story, **S. Rosemary Flanigan '47**, **S. Barbara Moore '62** and **S. Roberta Schmidt '49** are Avila alumnae. On May 9, 2015, each will receive an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at Avila's graduation ceremony for their social justice and career accomplishments. We are proud to have them as members of the Avila family. Congratulations Sisters!



CSJ "Sisters of Selma" Rosemary Flanigan (left) and Roberta Schmidt (left) march for voting rights for African Americans.

These sisters and other sisters of St. Joseph are featured in the PBS documentary, *Sisters of Selma: Women Who Change* (2007) by James H. H. H.



AP





Post Productions

Veteran film student directs a path to recovery

Cleveland Neal is a U.S. Army veteran who served two tours of duty in the Iraq War. He's currently a film student at Avila University. Neal combined these parts of his life and the result is the creation of a work of art, which has helped Neal and many other Iraq veterans struggling to put the past behind them.

Neal was honorably discharged in 2008 and returned home with numerous commendations, including a Combat Action Badge and Overseas Badge. He also returned with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which manifested itself in persistent nightmares that placed Neal back on front lines and created, at-times, crippling anxiety and tension.

While getting treatment for his PTSD at a local Veterans Administration, Neal heard about Avila. He was looking for a smaller university, as larger crowds exacerbated his anxiety levels. It was at Avila where he found a comforting and welcoming place to further his education, and where he became passionate about film and filmmaking.

When Nicole Esquibel, professor of film and digital media, School of Visual and Communications Arts, learned of Neal's PTSD, she suggested that he should get out some of those bottled-up feelings and experiences by creating a film.

"This movie was a way for Nicole to help me with therapy," said Neal, "She told me to write down all my dreams and I turned that into a script. It's me going through this struggle of having a nightmare every day. The movie helped to deal with what was wrong with me."

If it could help Neal manage his PTSD, why not other veterans? That was the notion of his doctor at the Veterans Administration, who shared and will continue sharing "Box In" with other combat vets.

"Mr. Neal's movie has had a positive and profound affect in helping other combat veterans talk about and address their sleep difficulties, nightmare activity and PTSD symptoms," said Thomas Demark, MD.

Today, Neal is doing much better and looking forward to graduating in December 2015. 🎬



L to R: Theresa Hancock, Eric Robertson, and Megan Segars, with Jason Harris, Director of Design and Technology. (Not pictured, Alex Davila)

WINNING AWARDS

Students in Avila University's College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Department of Theatre recently attended the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival Region V Conference in Bloomington, Mn. and returned with several national awards in tow.

Alex Davila won the Don Childs Award for Excellence in Technology and Design. Eric Robertson earned second place in Lighting Design for "Romeo and Juliet". An Honorable Mention in Sound Design for August: Osage County was awarded to Theresa Hancock. Megan Segars won an Honorable Mention in Prop Design for "Romeo and Juliet".

The students were mentored by Jason Harris, Associate Professor of Theatre and Director of Design and Technology, who is in his 12th year at Avila. "What I enjoy most is watching as the students become engaged in the festival, connecting with mentors and seeking individual feedback," Harris said.

Shining Star

Spotlight on Actress Kaitlin Gould

Kaitlin facing out to the audience during rehearsal at The Globe.

Kaitlin Gould '14, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in Theater, Acting and Tech concentration, has taken the stage in London, pursuing her master's degree at the University of Essex-Loughton Campus, or "East 15."

Reflecting on her acting adventures, "My current training is very detailed and specific, and requires many late nights of researching and rehearsals. I've done

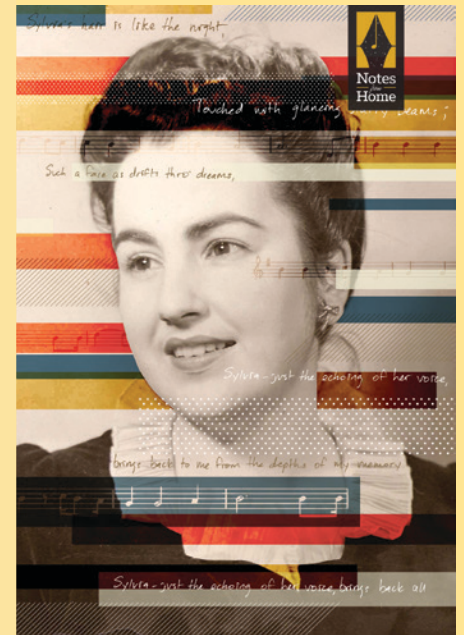
scenes from three different styles of plays now, and am about to head into our first full production next term. I have met people from Norway, Brazil, Taiwan, Egypt, France, various cities in the United States, and several more places all over the world. The amount that I have learned at East 15 so far has been immense, satisfying, eye opening, and life changing.

Had I not received training from Avila prior to attending East 15, I'm not sure I'd have the same attitude. I received several opportunities to see the world, to grow; the theatre ensured various styles of plays were taught and produced. But most importantly, to try and fail without the fear of failing, which is the most important part of an institution. Students who fear failure are not learning or challenging themselves. My theatre training at Avila helped me in being open and brave. Without it I would not be where I am right now."

Sean Allen '14 Racks Up The Awards

Sean Allen, Graphic Design class of 2014, was recently published in Creative Quarterly for two Avila projects: Notes from Home, from Eric Winter's Design Studio: Identity course, and Pioneers of American Architecture Book Series, for Susan Lawlor's Design Studio: Publication course.

Notes from Home and Sean's Landfall Navigation also made it into the American Institute of Graphic Arts A10 awards.



Avila's Values Are in Her Genes

Within two weeks of stepping on campus, Rylie Odom said she knew Avila University was the right place for her. And, there's one specific anecdote she brings up to make her point.

Odom began her collegiate career at a larger state university in Kansas, but quickly grew frustrated when she found she couldn't get into all her required classes because they already were full.

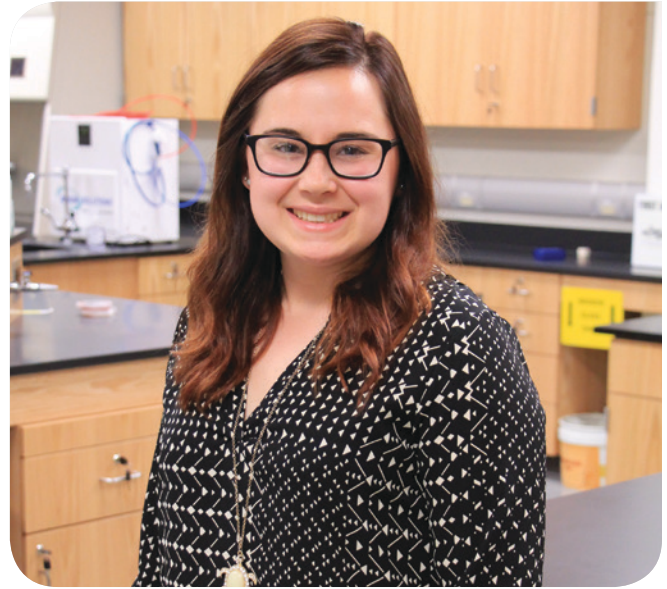
"I was told there was nothing they could do about it, and I'd just have to go an extra semester," she said.

That wasn't the case at Avila, where Odom transferred to begin her sophomore year. When she found out that one of the classes she needed was full, she went and talked to her advisor and the dean of the School of Science and Health, Larry Sullivan, Ph.D.

"When I told Dr. Sullivan that a class I needed was full, he told me that he would move an extra chair into the classroom himself," she said.

"At Avila, they're really looking out for the students."

Odom is on course to graduate in May 2016. She's looking at attending an osteopathic medical school and



the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences is a strong possibility. She wants to specialize in clinical genetics and eventually work in the area of genetic counseling.

Although she commutes to classes from her family's home in Lee's Summit, Odom stays active on campus as vice president of student government. She's involved with Alpha Epsilon Delta, the pre-med student honor society.

"I just love the atmosphere," Rylie said. "The professors are always willing to take the time to help students."

A Kind Thank You To The Avila Community

My wife, Mary Margaret, joins me in thanking Avila University for the very successful campus bone marrow donor registration drive on March 10. We especially want to thank Coach Cronk and the Eagle's Baseball team for sponsoring this event. Also a huge shout-out goes to Drew Lutzke for his leadership and hard work in planning and organizing the drive. And, it would not have happened at all without the good support and assistance of Jason Baldwin. So, thank you all and particularly the 128 generous and compassionate students, faculty and staff who registered. Surely, within a few months someone or two of you will receive a phone call that you are a donor match and will then have the blessed opportunity of becoming some blood cancer patient's lifesaving hero.



- John Murry

A Career in Medicine Starts Here



Austin Armstrong knows it sounds cliché, but he really was attracted to the small-town-feel-in-a-big-city vibe that Avila University provides. Cliché or not, it is a move that has paid off for Armstrong as he pursues his academic goals.

A double major in pre-health and biology with a chemistry minor, Arm-

strong said Avila has the “appropriate values, small class sizes and unbeatable interaction with faculty” that he needs to succeed. He credits Larry Sullivan, Ph.D., dean of the School of Science and Health, with selling him on the program.

“He’s a wonderful person who knows and teaches theory and prac-

tice,” Armstrong said. “He has important connections that allow him to better serve the students in achieving their goals.”

Armstrong’s goal is to complete his undergraduate work and attend medical school. To prepare him for his professional future, he has participated in many extracurricular activities that include Bio-Med Club, Tri-Beta, Avila Ambassadors and Campus Ministry.

“I hope to obtain an unrivaled education that will help me achieve my personal goals and better equip me to overcome endeavors later in life,” he said. “My extracurricular activities at Avila have really forced me to adapt to my environment, to become better at managing myself and get me engaged outside of the academic realm.”

Armstrong said he has no doubts his time at Avila, both in and out of the classroom, will leave him fully prepared to achieve his ultimate goal in life. 🏆

A Sister's Footsteps

Mackenzie Hoyer has been all about following family traditions. When it came time to choose a nursing school, she decided to follow sister Madison '09 and cousin Danielle Hoyer Postlewait '12 to Avila University's School of Nursing.

“I wanted a smaller school where I could get more time with my teachers,” Hoyer said. “I feel like Avila really cares about the student.”

Hoyer said she’s especially enjoyed studying in the newly-renovated Learning Commons, where she and classmates often meet in one of the many study rooms and work through material by writing information on writable walls. She said she also loves the easy access she has to the nursing lab, where she can practice her techniques. She’s become a member of the Avila



Student Nurse Organization that provides programs of interest to nursing students.

“I like Avila a lot,” she said. “My teachers are really nice, and I’ve made a lot of new friends. It’s everything I’d hoped it would be.”

Inspired Events!



3

1. Goppert Theatre performance of
Romeo and Juliet

2. Student Phon-A-Thon

3. Thornhill Gallery, The Dream Comes
from China: Wang Jing and Li Xiongy;

4. The Ethnic Food Festival

5. The NO-MORE Campaign

6. Easter Egg Hunt

7. Avila Dear Neighbor Day 2015

8. Cocoa and Carols

9. Center for Transformational
Learning Reception

10. United States Senator Claire McCaskill Visit



1



4



6

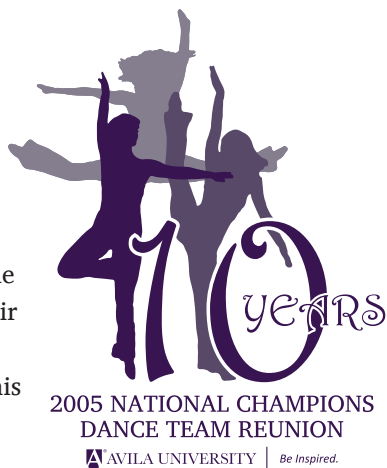


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Dance Reunion

The 2005 National Champion Dance Team was recognized during halftime of the Men's basketball game for their 10-year reunion. Thirteen of the 16 teammates were in attendance for this special event.



Above: Head Coach, Cindy Freeman, Anna Cox Moody, Ashley Stoneking'08, Donna Jungman'06, Sarah Mumper Smith'06, Beth Young Shipley'07, Katy Singleton Saviano'07, Gigi Gans, Kim Basnight'07, Mandy Freeman Honeycutt'05, Everly White Fitzgerald'07, Kristen Cira Charpentier'06, Danielle Starkey Hendrickson'08, Raquel Thomas'00, coach.

Left: The Team was greeted at half court by the current Dance Team.



◀ 1940s Class Reunion and Luncheon Friday, July 17, 2015 12:00 p.m. | Marian Center

Calling alumni from the 1940s for the 4th Annual 1940s Class Reunion & Luncheon. Reminisce with classmates and view archive items from your time at Avila.

RSVP by July 8 at 816.501.3613 or alumni@avila.edu.



STONE HILL

WINERY®





Chiefs Tailgate

The Alumni Association sponsored a Tailgate Party before the Kansas City Chiefs game against the New York Jets. More than 50 Alumni and friends reconnected, met new friends and cheered the Chiefs to a 24-10 victory.

Above: Sylvia Brown '02 and Ritz Rivera.

Left: Connie Firner '78 and Toni Firner.

HERMANN

◀ Hermann Wine Tour Saturday, August 15, 2015

Join the Avila Alumni Association on a trip to Hermann, Mo. for a tour and tasting at Stone Hill Winery with time afterwards to explore Hermann. Tickets include round trip transportation from Avila's campus to Hermann, continental breakfast and lunch. Watch your mail and email for additional details or visit avila.edu/alumni/events.



◀ Sporting KC Tailgate Wednesday, August 19, 2015

Join the Avila Alumni Association for a tailgate before the 7:10 pm Sporting KC game against the San Jose Earthquakes. Sign up today at avila.edu/alumni/events.

Alumni Events

Waris Reception

The Alumni Association sponsored the 40th Anniversary Basketball Celebration Reception at the home of Patty Waris. Alumni from the first Men's Basketball team reconnected and shared memories.



Pictured: Teddy Melton, Mark Hatchett '83, Charles Allen '84, Fred Haney '83, Kenneth Wyatt '78, Tom Rice '80, James Hack '77, Dave Hudson '76, Denny Joyce '77, Jeff Gilmore '80, John Shern '78, Kendrick Lewis, Bob Hardin '78, Mike Moran '83, President, Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA.



Avila Alumni Basketball Scrimmage

The Alumni Basketball Scrimmage was recently held in the Mabee Fieldhouse. Alumni scrimmaged against the current teams enjoying the competition and a fun-workout. Pictured with the current women's team from left to right in white jerseys: Angie Meador Chamberlin '02, Kari Donnell Clevenger '00, '06, Sherri Miller '99, Lisa McClellan Norris '01, Annora Smith Quenzer '05.



Wine 101

The Alumni Association hosted a premium wine event. Alums were invited to learn about and sample a variety of domestic wines. Isaiah Hultman, '99 and Dan Daily '83 of Glazers sponsored the event and representatives, Alexis Ganter and Hannah Hartman-Frost, shared their extensive knowledge of wineries, wines and wine-tasting.

Pictured: Christine Ojile '82, Richard Robertson, Tami Robertson '81, Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, Thermal Stewart, Belinda Strobe '82, Linda Cosgrove '82, Nick Laposha '81, Amy Laposha, Thomas Crook '82 and Beth Crook '82.

Upcoming Events

Football Reunion Saturday May 2, 2015

Football team alumni are invited to play in the first ever, Avila Alumni flag football game at Avila Field at 10:30 am. Contact Sara Boatwright with questions or register at 816.501.3613 or sara.boatwright@avila.edu

Alumni at Last Bash Thursday, May 7, 2015 5:30-7:30 pm

Martin City Brewing Company Pub
Join us as we celebrate and congratulate the newest alumni from the Class of 2015. For questions, contact Sara Boatwright at 816.501.3613 or sara.boatwright@avila.edu.

Centennial Trip Info Session Thursday, May 28, 2015 5:00 pm

Blue Hills Country Club
Learn about Avila's Centennial Trip to Paris and LePuy-en-Velay, where the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet formed in the 17th century. Travel with President Ron and First Lady Suzanne Slepitzka, alumni, faculty, students and friends. RSVP to Bailey Carr at bailey.carr@avila.edu or 816.501.3780. Note: Your attendance does not imply a commitment to go on the trip.

Wine Tasting Trip - Hermann, MO Saturday, August 15, 2015

Join the Alumni Association on a wine-tasting adventure through Hermann, Mo. Visit Avila.edu/alumni/events for more details!

Sporting KC Tailgate Wednesday, August 19, 2015

The Alumni Association will be selling tickets to a Sporting KC game. We hope you can join us for a tailgate before the game and then cheer on Sporting KC. If you are a season ticket holder, simply join us for the tailgate! Visit Avila.edu/alumni/events for more details!

Homecoming Weekend Forever Purple: Countdown to 100 Years September 24-27, 2015

Reconnect, reminisce and reflect on your college days during Homecoming Weekend 2015. We are honoring classes ending in "5" and "0". Homecoming Weekend has something for everyone as we count down to Avila's Centennial Year. For more Homecoming 2015 details visit avila.edu/alumni/homecoming

Call for Alumni Awards

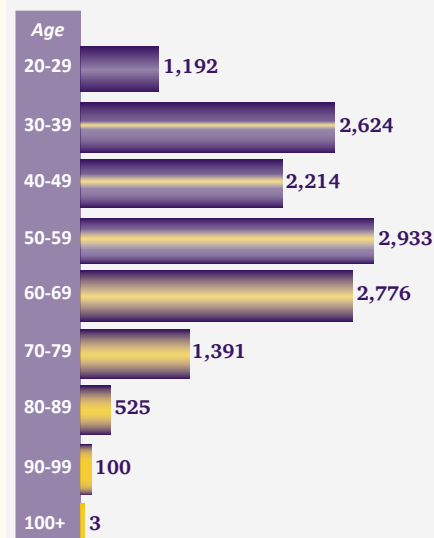
Do you know an outstanding Avila Classmate or Alumni? Visit www.avila.edu/alumni/awards to nominate them for one of the Annual Alumni Awards presented at Homecoming 2015, September 24-27. There are numerous categories including Outstanding Alumni and Alumni Service Award. Nominations are due June 1, 2015 to the Advancement and Alumni Office.

Find out the latest Alumni news and activities by following us on Facebook at Avila University Alumni Association and on Twitter @AvilaAlumni and let us know what is new with you and on your mind. We want to hear from you!



AVILA ALUMNI BY THE NUMBERS

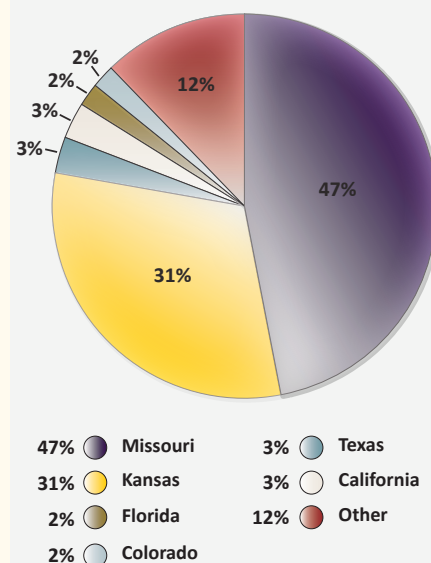
Age of Alumni



Total Alumni 15,156

- 3 Alumna are over the age of 100:
Clementine Templin Lovett '33
Cora Barber Miller '34
Katheryne Parker Woods '61

Alumni by State



Avila Institutional Research, 4.6.2015



39th Annual Avila University Steer Dinner & Auction

It was another record-breaking event for Avila University at the 39th Annual Steer Dinner & Auction held on February 7, 2015. This year's Steer Dinner, led by Honorary Chairs, Ken and Marilyn Hager, and Event Chairs, Bob '78 and Pat '79 Hardin, raised \$1,005,500. More than 650 guests and student volunteers, including over 200 alumni celebrated, contributed and danced the night away, all to make a difference for Avila students. Guests dined on a delicious steak and seafood dinner at the Downtown Marriott Muehlebach Hotel. The evening included a live and silent auction, photo opportunity and late night dancing to the Saucy Jack Band. Avila scholarship recipient and featured student speaker, Corina Guzman shared her touching experience as a first generation college student. Len Jennings from KMBC was the master of ceremony and he teamed up with the Nigro Brothers in the Live Auction. President Ron Slepitzka declared the evening as the official kick off of **Avila's Centennial Celebration**, as the University turns 100 years in 2016. See more Steer photos at www.avila.edu/steer.



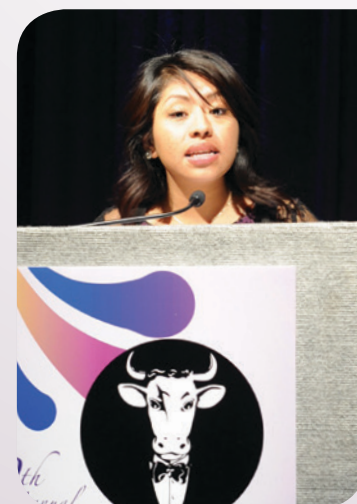
Taylor Hinderer and Lauren McCarthy '07



Joe Fahey, Board of Trustees member, S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.



Ken and Marilyn Hager, President Ron and Suzanne Slepitzka, Bob '78 and Pat '79 Hardin



Corina Guzman, Avila senior and scholarship speaker.



President Ron and Suzanne Sleptiza, Len Jennings from KMBC9, Emcee, Michelle Hunter and Bob Hunter, Chair Board of Trustees



Becky McGovern, Kenny Wyatt '78, Loretta Jones, Jeff Gilmore '80, Wayne Simien '78



Linda Tharpe, Patty Zender and Nancy McCarthy



Suzanne Sleptiza, Jeanne Hamilton Olofson '92, '94, '11 and Bob Fisher playing Heads & Tails.



Janelle Williams, Fawn Jamerson, Cecile O'Hara '10, and Michele Watley '09



Avila Alumni Association Board Members: Laura Barr '04, Cassi Furdere '05, Brian Potterbin '07, Cecile O'Hara '10 and Donna Jungman '06



Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet: Front Row (l to r) Ann Albrecht, CSJ, Ann Everett, CSJ, Helen Flemington, CSJ. Back Row (l to r) Laverne Aufmuth, CSJ, Mary Ann Donovan, CSJ, Margaret Vincent, CSJ, Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ, Ruth Stuckel, CSJ and Ann Landers, CSJ



University Singers performing under the direction of Dr. Amity Bryson, Music Department Chair.

Celebrating Student Success!

AVILA UNIVERSITY
Be Inspired.

avila.edu/steer



'95 DEREK FEAGANS recently accepted a position as general counsel for Tradebot Systems, Inc. and all related companies. This is Tradebot Systems, Inc.'s first general counsel and Derek is responsible for all legal matters for the companies.

'58 MARY JO BOWMAN had back surgery in 2014 causing her to miss Avila University's homecoming for the first time since she graduated. Mary Jo is now home from a long stay in the hospital and rehab.

'62 SISTER BARBARA MOORE marched across the Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. on Sunday, March 8th, 2015, 50 years after she and other Sisters of Selma participated in the civil rights movement.

'64 KATHLEEN (HEGARTY) THORNE is working on the third installment of her three part series of books on the history of Ireland.

'66 '06 JUDGE EDITH L. MESSINA, who was the first female circuit judge in Jackson County, Mo., retired December 31, 2014. She served as a judge for 30 years: "Being a judge is such a privilege," Messina said in a press release. "I don't even know what words to use to tell you about how much of a privilege it is to serve."

'68 CAROL JEAN (STIPETICH) DEFEU was recently featured in The Kanas City Star in an article where she discussed her heritage and life lessons through the gift of cooking.

'71 RITA SANDER, PH.D., RN recently received her Ph.D. from Saint Louis University.

'72 ELAINE STROPE recently joined the Board of Counselors at Avila. Elaine is currently the president for Dynatek Labs in Galena, Mo.

'74 SHIRLEY (RUNGE) WENDEL, Dean of Allied Health & Nursing, is retiring after 38 years at Kansas City Kansas Community College. She was a faculty member for four years before serving as director of nursing for 15 years. For the last 19 years, she has been dean of the division.

'77 DR. ED SHUMACHER has been a principle in the Columbia school district for 15 years and has accepted a new position in the Columbia, Mo. school system as principle of Smithton Middle School. Ed has remained close to Dr. Fred Geer and credits Avila University for his love of Education. Ed's personal mission statement of "Servant to others using education as my tool" has served him and his students very well.



'78 BOB HARDIN was recently asked to join the Avila University Board of Trustees. Bob is a retired executive vice president of the Country Club Bank. Bob and his wife, Pat Hardin '79, served as event chairs for the 39th Annual Steer Dinner & Auction.

'79 ELAINE (BAHR) NEIS recently became the executive director at the Vintage Park Assisted Living in Gardner, Kan.

'79 MARY CATHERINE (IM-MEGART) HEIMBERGER is a member of the Avila University Heritage Society and is a regional alumni

partner. She is extremely active and has interests, certifications and degrees in financial planning and theology. She is now pursuing her counseling certificate and doing her internship at two elementary schools in the Columbia, Mo. school district. Mary is passionate about reaching the youth with encouraging and insightful messages and direction.

'86 BARBARA (STEGMAN) ATKINSON returned to school 23 years after obtaining her bachelor's degree in Nursing and earned a master's degree in Nursing and certification as a Family Nurse Practitioner. Barbara is loving her new career!

'87 ELIZABETH (VANHORN) RICE recently became the IT Project Management Director at Computerized Assessments & Learning, LLC in Lawrence, Kan.

'89 ROBIN STUBENHOFER is serving on Avila University's newly-formed Computer Science/Software Engineering Advisory Council. Robin is the vice president for operations at Honeywell.

'95 BETH HEIDE, accepted a mentorship opportunity with Avila University's Microeconomics class. She will be working with a group of students exploring careers in education.

'96 SETH ECKLEMAN recently graduated from NYU with a master's degree in Theater Management. Seth has moved back to Kansas City and opened his own theater company.



'08 RINA (METHA) WRISINGER and husband, Tyler welcomed their first son, Myles Andrew Wrisinger on January 9, 2014. Myles weighed 8 pounds, 5 ounces and was 19.75 inches long.

'97 JOHN KOPECKY recently took a position as chief financial officer and chief risk officer at a bank in Nebraska.

'00 JON PAINE recently relocated to North Carolina for his job with Farmers Insurance.

'01 ANN (WARIS) ALEXIOU recently opened a Greek restaurant in Lenexa, Kan. with her husband, Matt. The restaurant is called Arris's Pizza.

'03 JEREMY LILLIG was recently awarded the Rising Star award by Kansas City's The Independent magazine for his work with Catholic Charities. See more on page 2.

'06 LINDSEY MEYER and husband Ivyn Paul Meyer, in February 2015. The family lives in Raymore, Mo.

'05 KEVIN FURDERER accepted a mentorship opportunity with Avila University's Microeconomics class. He will be working with a group of students exploring careers in business.

'05 REBECCA HENRY is serving on Avila University's newly-formed Computer Science/Software Engineering Advisory Council.

'05 '08, '11 KEITH RICHCREEK is serving on Avila University's newly-formed Computer Science/Software Engineering Advisory Council.

'07 MICHAEL DEEN recently accepted a position with KVC as a foster care recruiting specialist. Michael lives in Overland Park, Kan.

'07 BRIAN POTERBIN accepted a mentorship opportunity with Avila University's Microeconomics class. He will be working with a group of students exploring careers in business.

'07 KATY SINGLETON SAVIANO and husband, Nick '08 welcomed their second daughter, Harper Kathryn Saviano on November 20, 2014. She weighed 7lbs 4oz and was 18 3/4" long.



'07 GAYAN PEART was recently promoted to executive director at Bethany House of Northern Virginia.

'08 DANIELLE (STARKEY) HENDRICKSON has been working full time pursuing her graphic design degree and running her own photography business as a portrait and wedding photographer since her graduation from Avila. She is married and has one son. The family currently resides in Raytown, Mo.

'08 TERESA (DIEBAL) LODEN and husband Jason '08 welcomed their first daughter on October 26, 2014. She weighed 6 lbs. 13 oz. The family lives in Omaha, Neb. where Teresa is a pediatric resident at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

'08 AMANDA (CURTICE) WADSWORTH is serving on Avila University's newly-formed Computer Science/Software Engineering Advisory Council.

'09 ANDY PERKINS accepted a mentorship opportunity with Avila University's Microeconomics class. He will be working with a group of students exploring careers in theatre.

'09 MICHELE WATLEY recently joined the Board of Counselors at Avila University. Michele is currently the director for the Missouri Secretary of State Kansas City Office.

'09 MICHAEL BRUN married Wendy McCraner on November 7, 2014. Michael was recently commissioned in the United States Navy and stationed in San Diego, Calif. He currently holds a position as communications office on board an Aegis Guided Missile Cruiser, USS Lake Erie (CG 70).

'10 VALERIE REED recently accepted a marketing and community relations specialist position, for the new Whole Foods Market - Olathe, Kan.

'10 BANEN CHANEY recently accepted a position as the associate producer and digital editor for Kansas City's Morning News on 98.1 KMBZ.

'12 ELLEN BARNES recently became the business process modeling & reengineering analyst at GEHA and is serving as the current - president for Mid-America Chapter of PMI.



'12 CHRISTINA PARISSE and husband, Josh, welcomed their son, Giovanni Joseph on March 9, 2015. Giovanni joins big sister, Tessa.

'11 ELIZABETH (ROWDEN) BRUEMMER was married to Kurt Bruemmer in September. The couple resides in Westphalia, Mo. Liz is currently a licensed clinical social worker with Pathways Community Behavioral Health.

'11 NICK NICHOLS has accepted a new position as an account executive for Total Quality Logistics in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

'11 MELANIE PRIDY recently became a teacher at Partners in Behavioral Milestones working one-on-one with children diagnosed with autism.

'12 EMILEE (BICKLEMAN) HILL has accepted the special events coordinator position at Garmin.

'12 FERAS JARWAN recently became the shipping and sales operations manager at Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals.

'12 MARC BENAVIDEZ has accepted a full time position at Avila University as the recruiting coordinator and offensive line coach for the football program.

'12 SARA BOATWRIGHT recently accepted a position in Avila University's Office of Advancement and Alumni as the events coordinator. Sara is also working on her master's degree in Fundraising at Avila.

'12 PAM (TAYLOR) HOCKERSON and husband, Sanchez Hockerson, welcomed their fourth child, Royce Sanchez Hockerson, on November 26, 2014. Royce is a wonderful addition to their family with son Kenzo and daughters, Sanaa and Sydney.

'12 JOSH LOHKAMP married Candice Klosky on July 5th 2014. The couple resides in Springfield, Mo.

'12 ERIN (SCHULTZ) POTTER and husband Eric Potter '12 welcomed their first child, son Oliver Scott Potter, on September 30, 2014. Oliver weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces. The family resides in Omaha, Neb.



'13 TYLER SEABAUGH recently joined the Avila University staff as an admission representative for the Undergraduate Admission Office recruiting high school students.

'13 ERIN (SCOTT) TALBERT married Brian Talbert May 17th, 2014. The couple resides in Mission, Kan.

'13 NICHOLAS JOHNSON recently founded Triple Threat (T3) Sports and Fitness. T3 offers a sports specific training for professional and student athletes, as well as personal training for clients who want to improve overall fitness.

Stay Connected

We want to hear from you!

Job promotion, new baby, recent travels, new home? Let us know so we can share your good news!

Email your news to alumni@avila.edu or complete the What's New With You form at avila.edu/alumni.

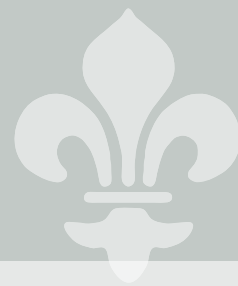


Avila's Centennial Celebration is coming in 2016.

Send your memories, photographs and stories to **Haley Jones**, Marketing Coordinator, via email at haley.jones@avila.edu, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/avilauniversity or postal mail us at: Avila University, Office of Marketing and Communications, 11901 Wornall Road, Kansas City, MO 64145. Be sure to include your current address and phone number.

As Avila's 100-year plans develop we'll keep you informed, so you can be part of the celebration!

In Memoriam



'35 MARGARET HIX MILLER passed away January 22, 2015. Margaret was a graduate of St. Teresa's Academy and St. Teresa College, now Avila University. Margaret worked over the years at Country Club Dairy and Western Electric in Lee's Summit, Mo., where she retired in 1981, as a Pioneer member. She was one of the first two females accepted into the Engineering Universe at the Lee's Summit plant.

'43 MARY K. MCDERMOTT passed away February 21, 2015. She earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'47 PATRICIA KITTINGER BARTEL died March 9, 2015, in Sidney, Ohio at age 87. Patty attended St. Theresa's Academy and College. Her daughter, Kathleen Kittinger Young, received her BSN at Avila College in 1974.

'51 JULIA A. CARSON passed away on January 8, 2015. Julie attended College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'54 LORETTA JUNE KELLEY passed away February 1, 2015. She earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'56 SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE BREINER passed away January 2, 2015. She earned her bachelor's

degree in elementary education and minors in Philosophy and History from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'56 PAULA A. CRIGGER passed away October 26, 2014. Paula received her bachelor's degree in nursing from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'60 MARY JO TRUOG passed away November 27, 2014. Mary Jo received her bachelor's degree in business administration from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'61 JUDITH A. FORD passed away on February 5th, 2015. Judy graduated with a bachelor's degree in English from College of St. Teresa, now Avila University.

'72 MARY LOU ARNONE passed away December 22, 2014. Mary Lou received her bachelor's degree in mathematics from Avila College, now Avila University.

'75 NELMA JANE ANDREW passed away February 27, 2015. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Avila College, now Avila University.

'76 MONA M. SHIRKEY SNOWDEN passed away March 4, 2015. She was employed by Mobil Oil Corporation for 43 years, retiring in 1984. Mona was a graduate

of Avila College, now Avila University, receiving her bachelor's in psychology.

'77 MILDRED L. CAPERS passed away January 7, 2015. Milie received her bachelor's degree in nursing from Avila College, now Avila University.

'82 KIM ANH THI DANG passed away February 21, 2015. She earned her bachelor's degree in finance from Avila College, now Avila University.

'82 THERESE N. WILKES passed away January 15, 2015. Therese received her bachelor's degree in healthcare services from Avila College, now Avila University.

'86 KATHERINE VIRGINIA MCNERNEY passed away February 19, 2015. She earned her bachelor's degree in education from Avila College, now Avila University.

'96 GORDON L. HAYNES passed away on January 23, 2015. He received his master's degree in counseling psychology from Avila College, now Avila University.

RICHARD L. COLEMAN, former board member of Avila University, passed away October 19, 2014. Coleman, who was retired, had been Vice President of Carter-Waters Corporation, served as a Eucharistic Minister and Lector at St. Thomas More.

To make a memorial gift, please visit avila.edu/give or call 816.501.3602.

In Memoriam

Avila University mourned the loss of a few University leaders this past winter. Each made a lasting mark on Avila, and their legacies will not be forgotten.

ANNA B. COLES, PH.D., RN, BSN, '58 nursing alumna and former Board of Trustee passed away February 4, 2015. Anna was a passionate nurse and founding Dean of Howard University (HU) College of Nursing in Washington D.C. She was the first African American nurse to be elected to the Institute of Medicine in 1974. Anna was also the recipient of the Presidential Citation from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. She received the Avila Medal of Honor in 1969 and the Nursing Alumni Award in 2006. Anna served on the Avila Board of Trustees from 2008-2013 and was a member of the Learning Environment Committee. She will be dearly missed.

THOMAS J. FRITZLEN, M.D., Avila University Board of Counselor, supporter and dear friend passed away



on December 12, 2014. Tom was a joyful and humble man whose faith and family were foremost in his life. He was an example to all who knew him. His standard response when asked how he was doing was, "I am happy!". Tom married Virginia Anne Smith, a 1953 alumna, on May 9, 1959, and they celebrated 49 years of

marriage before her death in 2008. In 2014, Tom and his family established the Anne Smith Fritzlen '53 Reading Room in the Martha Smith Archives & Research Center in the Learning Commons. Tom is greatly missed by the Avila family, particularly among the Board of Counselors, to which he served on for five years.

VITA GOPPERT '72, visionary leader, supporter and dear friend of Avila University passed away November 13, 2014. Vita is known as “The First Lady” of Avila for being the first female lay trustee, serving on Avila’s Board of Trustees from



1969 to 1983. Vita received an honorary doctorate from Avila in 1972, and helped establish Goppert Theatre for its opening season in 1974. She was a visionary leader for Avila, and a dear friend and advisor to Sister Olive Louise Dallavis. In 1990, she established an endowed scholarship in her mother’s name, Cecil Viola Scribner, which provides an annual scholarship to an Avila student. In 2012, Vita was inducted into Avila’s Father Medaille Society. Her support, particularly



of the performing arts program, has and will continue to impact countless students. The Avila University Singers honored Vita’s legacy by singing at her memorial service, and Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA delivered a loving eulogy. Vita’s profound imprint on Avila University and the Kansas City community has made a lasting impact, and she will be deeply missed.





In Memoriam



JACK WYLIE, supporter and dear friend of Avila University passed away on December 23, 2014. Jack was a passionate philanthropist whose support provided scholarships, faculty/student development and capital improvements at Avila. In 2013, Jack established the Glenna Wylie Nursing Study Room in the School of Nursing in memory of his late wife. He also named the Glenna Wylie Nursing Scholars, which provides 12 nursing students with a full scholarship, and helped fund professional development opportunities for both faculty and students in the School of Nursing. In the fall of 2014, Jack named the University's newest residence hall, Glenna Wylie Hall, to again honor his wife's memory. It was dedicated April 21st and houses more than 100 students. His support has and will continue to impact hundreds of Avila students for many years to come.



WILLIAM LOUIS, PH.D. '90, art alumnus and former Avila University professor passed away February 1, 2015. After serving in the US Army in Korea, he earned his MA from Boston College and his Ph.D. from Stanford University in Speech/Theater and Humanities. He later settled in Kansas City, where he taught theatre for many years at Avila University. In the early 1970's, he wrote the communication degree program plan for Avila. He was an actor, poet, sculptor and painter. Much of his art was expressive of God's love for us, and he frequently donated pieces for Avila's Steer Dinner & Auction. He was beloved by his students and his memory will live on through the many students he impacted through his teaching.



Voices

Avila's Social Network

"Experience at @AvilaUniversity brings students face-to-face with themselves as a different race"
Twitter, Fox 4 News

"Yesterday I went to Avila University to participate in 'The Race Experience'. It was interesting...."
Twitter, Michele Smith

"Congratulations to our client, Avila University, for its selection as a 2015 EDC Cornerstone Awards Finalist! Straub is proud to have been a part of the Avila Learning Commons"
Facebook, Straub Construction Company, Inc.

"Today I signed to Avila University and my life has changed. Thank God and my family. Anything is possible"
Twitter, @lifeisadicegame

"The Credo Campus Planning and Architecture Team is building a campus master plan for our partners at Avila University. We couldn't be more excited!"
Facebook, Credo

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Paulette Gladis, CSJ, Ph.D.
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State Government
(retired)
Ballwin, Mo.

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Polsinelli
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Vercie L. Lark
DST Systems
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Christine Ojile '82
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Jeanne Hamilton Olofson
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Mark C. Thompson
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Kansas City, Mo.

Ana Valdez '96
Truman Medical Center
Kansas City, Mo.

Rick Weller,
Treasurer
Euronet Worldwide, Inc.
Overland Park, Kan.

RAISING THE BAR



Indoor Track Season

Not many knew what to expect as Avila competed in its first ever indoor track and field season this past winter, but the newly formed Avila track team likely exceeded most expectations when they saw the results each week.

Avila earned multiple top-10 and top-5 finishes in individual events throughout the season, and the Eagles also earned multiple first place finishes.

While any first place finish is special, the most impressive performance of the indoor season for Avila came at

the Heart of America Athletic Conference Indoor Championships on February 20th when Sarah Krig won the conference championship in the Women's Pentathlon. She finished the event with 2,629 points, 20 points more than the second place finisher. Her victory in the Pentathlon was Avila's first ever HAAC championship in track, and it brought her First Team All-HAAC Honors. Krig also earned Honorable Mention honors in the Women's High Jump with her fourth place finish.

Two other Eagles, Jenna Rangel and Tiffany Zinn, earned Honorable Mention All-HAAC honors at the Indoor Championships. Rangel earned honors for both the Women's 55-meter Dash and the 400-meter Dash, placing fifth in the 55-meter and fourth in the 400-meter, respectively. Zinn earned Honorable Mention honors by placing fourth in the Women's 1,000-meter run.

While the indoor season came to a close after the HAAC Indoor Championships in late February, the Eagles did not get a lot of time to celebrate. Avila's outdoor track season kicked off in March 2015. 🏃



Where is Home?



Eagle's Heart Nests at Avila

Robert Johnson was on a roll through his first two years at Avila University. The athletic Houston native was Newcomer of the Year and honorable mention all-Heart of America Athletic Conference as a freshman wide receiver on the Eagles football team. His sophomore season he was honorable mention all-conference as a receiver and first-team all-conference as a kick returner. He was halfway to a bachelor's degree in accounting, and all was well.

Except, Johnson missed his family in Texas.

"I decided to go home and try to play football where they could see me and I could see them a lot more," Johnson said.

As it turned out, Johnson missed Avila. He realized that he was spending more time keeping in touch with his Avila teammates than he was his core group of high school friends. He missed the family environment and social ease that came to him at Avila. He missed the relationships he had formed with his professors and small classes.

"Avila is an experience I'll never forget," Johnson said. "I've met teammates who are like brothers to me. I play for a coaching staff that has my back. And, I have professors who are quick to help." 🏈

Halls of Fame

It's been an eventful couple of months for Avila University head baseball coach Daryl Cronk, who was recently inducted into the Belton High School Athletics Hall of Fame and the Pitt State Athletics Hall of Fame.

Cronk said that he is very humbled to be inducted into both the Belton and Pitt State Halls of Fame, and that both phone calls were very surprising.

"You never play a game for the accolades, and after I was done with my high school and college careers, I never expected, or even thought

about being a Hall of Fame player," Cronk said.

As if being inducted into two Halls of Fame was not great enough, Cronk recently earned his 100th career victory at Avila.

Cronk is currently in his fourth season with the Eagles, leading them to back-to-back NAIA tournament appearances.





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in Psychology

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Resources

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Paying It Forward

No matter the capacity Donna Njemanze believes in giving back, whether it's providing for a loved one or serving the community.

Growing up, Donna's parents played a major role in shaping her life. "My mom was a strong influence," she said. "She worked two jobs to support me and my four other siblings. Watching how hard she worked inspired me to get a bachelor's and master's degree so I could provide for her as well as she provided for me."

While she was working towards her bachelor's degree at Avila, her father became critically ill. To help



during this difficult time Donna moved in with her father, worked full-time, and went to school at night to finish her education. Her professors were caring and understanding about her situation, working with her to make sure she would complete her coursework. She remembers sitting by her father's hospital bed studying and writing

papers. "My father was a strong advocate for education, encouraging all of us to pursue academic accomplishments," she said. Her father passed away three months prior to graduation, but supported Donna throughout her college career.

After graduation, Donna went on to work for CIGNA, a health insurance company in Kansas City. While living in Kansas City, Donna met her late husband, Dr. James Njemanze. Together, Donna and Dr. Njemanze built a successful medical practice in Phoenix, Ariz. and had three children. Sadly, Dr. Njemanze passed away in 2010 after a sudden and swift bout of cancer.

Currently, Donna gives much of her time to those in need. She volunteers for the Grand Canyon Guild, women's shelters, serves on her church's advisory board, supports a child in India, and gives food to homeless families.

In 2014, Donna came back to Avila for the first time since 1990 to be inducted into the Heritage Society. Donna has a bequest to establish two endowed scholarship funds to support African American students. One will aid students pursuing a degree in healthcare and the other African Americans in any field. Donna wants to pay it forward and support other African American students. "Students can fall short even with grants and I want to help those who ordinarily may not get the opportunity to get an education," she said.

The legacy Donna wishes to leave is one described best by a song recorded by Dianna Ross, "reach out and touch somebody's hand, make this world a better place if you can. If you see an old friend on the



street and he's down remember his shoes could fit your feet. Try a little kindness; you'll see it's something that comes very naturally. We can change things if we start giving. Why don't you reach out and touch somebody's hand." 🙏

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Establishing an endowed scholarship to benefit future Avila students is just one way you can join The Avila Heritage Society.

The Heritage Society was established in 1988 to recognize the remarkable contributions of Avila alumni and friends who have made provisions in their estate plans or lifetime planned gifts to support the future needs of the University. Such provisions may include:

- Bequests through Wills and Trusts
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To find out more about joining Avila's Heritage Society or the gift vehicles above, please contact Keith Jaloma, director of major gifts, at 816.501.3696.



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